

What can you do

- Do not feed your pets outside, or if you must, feed them outside during the day, and take food and water bowls inside during the night.
- Keep garbage in sturdy garbage cans with secure lids.
- Rinse cans and bottles before you store them for recycling.
- Keep your compost pile fenced from animals, or use a closed compost container.
- Do not leave food out for animals.
- Do not feed animals by hand or try to lure them into your house or yard.
- Harvest your fruit trees when the fruit ripens and remove any fruit that falls on the ground.
- If bears or other potentially dangerous animals appear remove bird feeders and other sources of food until they leave. Bears love sunflower seeds and suet and will come right up to your house to get them. They also love to clean your dirty barbecue grill for you.



- Birdfeeders should be scrubbed clean at least once a week and disinfected with a ten-percent solution of bleach water. Allow the feeder to air dry before refilling it with seed. Clean and disinfect bird baths in a similar fashion.

Note: For an in-depth look at the problems associated with feeding wildlife read

Feeding Wildlife...Just Say No! a Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) publication

available through their website at
www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org

FEEDING ANIMALS



There has been a huge growth in the number of people who, in addition to feeding birds, also directly or indirectly feed deer, bear and other animals around their homes and cabins. Feeding of wildlife places wildlife at risk and puts them on a collision course with humans. Help keep wildlife from coming into conflict with people because when that happens, everyone loses.



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www.fwp.state.mt.us

Montana Restrictions and Regulations prohibits any person from providing supplemental feed attractants to game animals by: *purposely or knowingly attracting bears with supplemental feed attractants...or purposely or knowingly providing supplemental feed attractants in a manner that results in an artificial concentration of game animals that may potentially contribute to the transmission of disease or that constitutes a threat to public safety...*

"Supplemental feed attractant" means any food, garbage, or other attractant for game animals.

Although we like to think that we are helping wildlife by providing food, the reality is that:

- Supplemental feeding encourages wildlife to become dependent on handouts that are not part of their natural diets.
- Human foods are usually nutritionally inadequate for wildlife and may lead to subsequent health problems.
- Young animals that are taught to depend on humans sometimes never develop normal foraging behavior, and could starve if the artificial food sources are removed or more likely become nuisances and come in conflict with humans.
- Wildlife lose their fear of humans and learn that they can boldly forage for human food, consequently conflicts, nuisance behavior, and risks to human safety are sure to occur.
- Wild animals being fed by humans may congregate in unnaturally high numbers, and this is the perfect opportunity for diseases to spread. As populations of deer, raccoons, skunks and others grow unnaturally from being fed, a small number of diseased animals mixed in close quarters with a large group spread the disease to the whole group. Disease such as rabies, distemper and many others which are dependent on high animal populations.
- Artificial feeding increases wild animal populations, which in turn increases stress. Such stressful conditions increase the incidence of fighting and injury among animals.
- Feeding wildlife, especially prey species such as deer, squirrels and rabbits, often causes a domino or food chain effect. Due to such feeding, the prey densities increase, which in turn attracts predators such as coyotes, bobcats and mountain lions. Example: Increase deer numbers in your yard and you may be inviting a mountain lion for a free meal.



Reducing conflicts between people and wildlife must be a neighborhood or community effort to be truly effective. If one person in a neighborhood is still feeding wildlife, that person is attracting the animals to the whole neighborhood. There are many complaints from people whose neighbors have been feeding wild animals. Often, the wildlife have become a nuisance and the caller wants to remove or kill them. Many people do not think about the neighborhood impact when they start feeding wildlife.



Work with your neighbors and create a community-wide effort.

Remember: when people and wildlife interact, wildlife often ends up losing. Always enjoy wildlife from a distance!

Does this mean backyard bird feeding is wrong? No. However, you should not feed birds when there is reasonable assumption that any animals may come to harm. While feeding birds in your backyard is generally not an activity that fits into this category, some conditions may warrant curtailing the provision of such food sources. For example, during the warmer months, when natural food sources are more readily available, it's usually best to reduce the amount of feed you put out each day or suspend feeding altogether, especially if deer, bears or other animals are getting into the feed. Remember that it's also important to maintain safe, clean feeding stations in order to prevent the spread of disease.